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THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT AGAINST ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AND RACISM

**Joint oral statement by the Asian Legal Resource Centre (ALRC) and the International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR) at the 19<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council**

**Item 3 – Interactive Dialogue with the Independent Expert on Minority Issues**

**Speaker: Mr. Daisuke Shirane**

***Check Against Delivery***

Thank you Madam President,

The ALRC and IMADR warmly welcome the Independent Expert's first report, including the focus on the double discrimination faced by minority women.

In Pakistan, extremist Islamic groups are frequently engaged in abducting girls from religious minorities, raping them and subjecting them to forced conversion and marriage. We estimate that 20 to 25 such conversions are occurring every month in Sindh province alone. Blasphemy laws continue to be abused to target minorities, notably Christians. The killings in 2011 of the Governor of Punjab, Salman Taseer, and the Federal Minister of Minority Affairs, Shabaz Bhatti, in relation to their efforts to protect minorities, are indicative of the problem.

The increased discrimination and deadly attacks faced by members of the Shia sect of Islam and the Ahmadiyya community in Pakistan, with the acquiescence of the state, remain pressing concerns. We hope that the Independent Expert will request a country visit to Pakistan as a priority.

In Indonesia, indigenous Papuans are frequently arbitrarily stigmatized as being separatists, arrested and tortured by the military or police, with impunity. Military operations in the Papuan highlands are resulting in killings and forced displacement of civilians. Minority rights are being undermined by a migration influx and the commercial exploitation of natural resources and land without sufficient consultation or compensation.

In Nepal, progress concerning minority rights remains a political football. On 15 February 2012, the cabinet decided to table a revised version of the Bill on Inclusion that fails to guarantee equal political participation for all castes, genders and indigenous peoples. In 2004, the CERD expressed concern "over the under-representation of disadvantaged groups in government, legislative bodies and the judiciary". Under the new version of the Bill, reservation quotas have been reduced to 15.8 per cent for women, 7 per cent for Dalits, and 25 per cent for indigenous peoples. The policy reflects political power rather than demographic proportionality, with Dalits thought to represent 20 per cent of Nepal's population, for example, and is therefore institutionalizing the marginalization of minority groups. We therefore call for intervention by the Independent Expert concerning these matters.

Thank you Madame President.